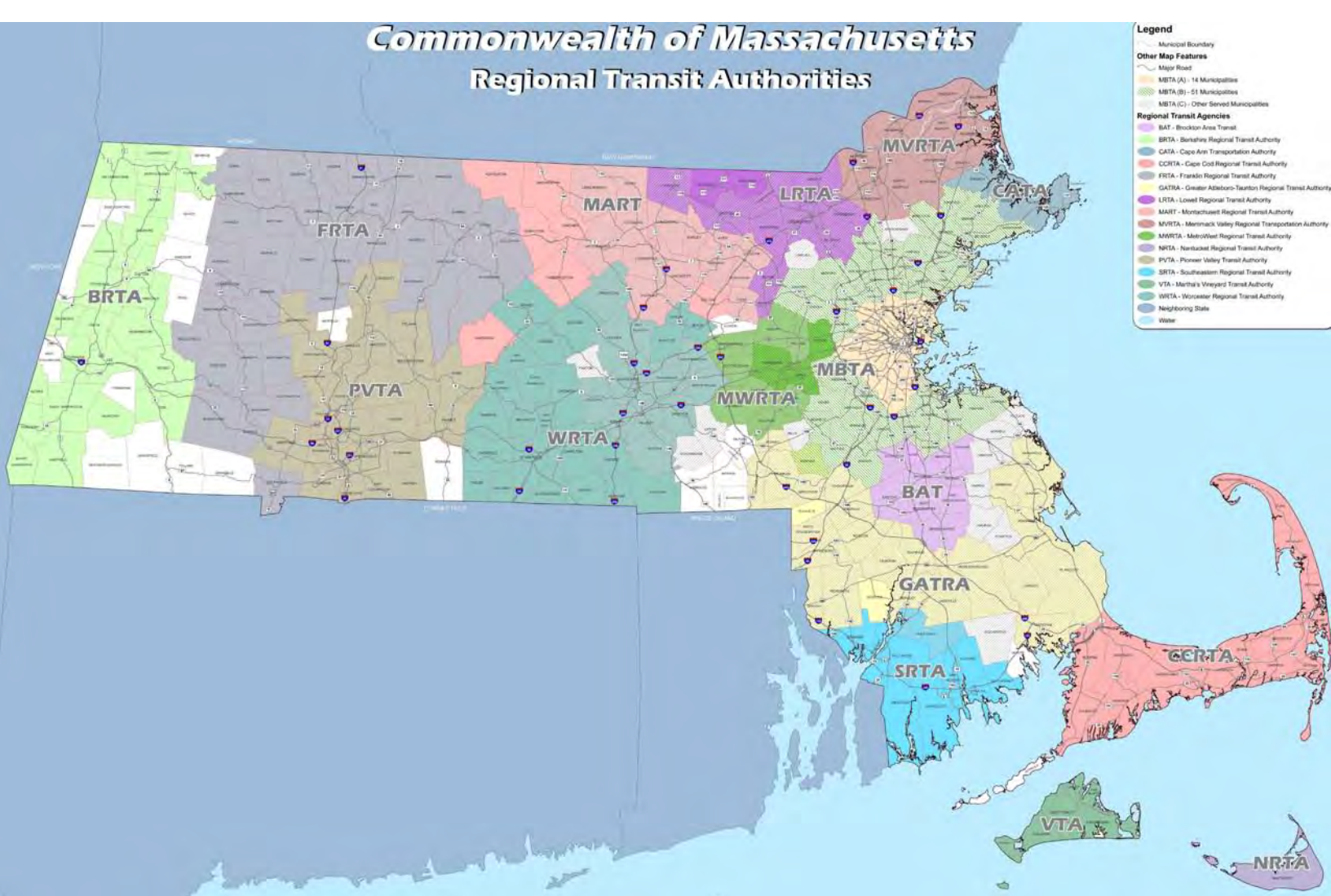


Commonwealth of Massachusetts Regional Transit Authorities



Massachusetts Department of Transportation



BEYOND BOSTON

A TRANSIT STUDY FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

Proposed Implementation Plan

6/25/2012





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INTRODUCTION

This document presents the recommendations / implementation plan for nine of the ten Beyond Boston initiatives.¹ For each initiative, the plan is broken into a series of subtasks, identifying responsibilities and a general timeline. Note that the recommendations are presented in a general priority order, which was developed based on Advisory Committee input prior to the May Advisory Committee. However, this order only represents preliminary priorities, and MassDOT will set final priorities based on input received from the Beyond Boston Advisory Committee at its June meeting and from the reconvened RTA Council.

Responsibility for individual actions within the implementation plans is assigned to either MassDOT, the RTAs, some combination of these organizations, or the RTA Council, which is assumed to be a joint RTA and MassDOT effort. A general definition of the individual categories of responsibility includes:

- **MassDOT** – led by MassDOT
- **RTAs** – led by RTAs
- **MassDOT and RTAs** – requires separate action from both entities
- **MassDOT with input from RTAs (or other entity)** – MassDOT lead with input from RTAs (or other entity)
- **RTA Council** – membership as defined in 161b; joint RTA and MassDOT effort

The implementation plan also includes general timelines, shown both in the text and as an accompanying graphic. Most timelines are general, but several include deadlines for completion of specific action items.

¹ The exception is the Foster Cross-Border Collaboration initiative, which would be undertaken by the RTAs without MassDOT involvement. As such, the RTAs would develop the implementation plan for that initiative.



A. IMPROVE MASSDOT/RTA COLLABORATION

Action	Responsibility	Duration
1. Reconvene the RTA Council with a Constructive Purpose		
a. Schedule quarterly meetings with participation by MassDOT staff and RTA Administrators.	MassDOT and RTAs	Start August 2012; quarterly meetings through FY 15
b. Re-engage purpose of RTA Council: - Initially to develop Beyond Boston initiatives. - Subsequently to address issues of MassDOT and RTA concerns.	RTA Council	
c. Establish subcommittees/working groups to address Beyond Boston initiatives and other issues (and which could be broadened beyond MassDOT and RTA Administrators for some topics).	RTA Council	
d. Identify next steps, set priorities, and identify responsible parties by topic.	RTA Council	
e. Devote portions of RTA Council meetings to educating MassDOT on RTA operations, missions and goals. May highlight one or more RTA at each meeting.	RTA Council	
f. Devote at least one RTA Council meeting to educating RTAs on MassDOT divisions, roles and responsibilities, plus key MassDOT procedures, such as contracting.	RTA Council	
2. Implement Changes within MassDOT to Improve Collaboration with RTAs		
a. Determine additional internal needs to implement Beyond Boston initiatives and other needs.	MassDOT with input from RTAs	Start immediately; ongoing through FY15
b. Identify existing problem areas and potential solutions.	RTA Council	
c. Identify responsibilities and tasks to be performed by MassDOT Rail and Transit Division: - To fulfill statutory requirements - To provide better service to RTAs	MassDOT	
d. Evaluate and determine appropriate management structure.	MassDOT	
e. Increase MassDOT staffing for RTA-related functions.	MassDOT	



B. DEVELOP MORE EFFECTIVE FUNDING PROCESSES

Action	Responsibility	Duration
1. Develop New Process for State Contract Assistance		
a. Develop RTA Working Group to determine RTA priorities and preferences.	MassDOT and RTAs	Start July 2012 SCA Funding Process complete by January, 2013 Implementation of revised process in FY 13
b. Set framework for development of priorities and preferences by RTA Working Group.		
c. Determine RTA priorities and preferences, such as: - How to classify RTAs by type (for example, Large/Medium Urban, Small Urban, Non-Urban, Rural, Large/Small, etc.) - The most desirable formula factors (for example, ridership, socioeconomic factors) - Shares of total SCA to be allocated by performance, need, and other factors - Methods to address federal funding - Preferences on SCA set-asides for discretionary initiatives, new services, special needs, etc.	RTA Working Group	
d. Review RTA Working Group proposals.	RTA Council	
e. Develop proposed SCA funding process based on Working Group recommendations: - Develop proposed SCA formula - Propose distribution process for set-aside amounts - Propose timeline for transition/phased implementation to new SCA distribution method - Address hold-harmless issues	MassDOT and RTAs	
f. Review proposed SCA funding distribution process/SCA formula with RTAs.	RTA Council	
g. Respond to comments on proposed formula, and issue final SCA distribution method, and implement new SCA formula for distribution of FY 2014 funds.	MassDOT and RTAs	
2. Develop New Capital Funding Allocation Process		
a. Revise application process to provide better information and justification for requested funds.	MassDOT with input from RTA Council	Start July 2013 Revised Capital Funding Process by February 2013
b. Draft evaluation criteria to compare projects across RTAs		
c. Incorporate RTA five year capital plans in capital planning process		
d. Identify shares of capital funding to be allocated to different statewide priorities (as determined in the Improve Capital Planning initiative).	MassDOT with input from RTAs	
e. Establish process for planning/ evaluating large, non-recurring expenditures.	MassDOT with input from RTAs	
f. Develop policies on use of Toll Credits for RTA projects.	MassDOT with input from RTAs	
g. Establish dedicated baseline level of capital assistance for RTAs not receiving direct federal capital assistance.	MassDOT with input from RTAs	
h. Provide funding based on priorities set in Statewide Capital Plan (see Capital Planning initiative).	MassDOT	
i. Incorporate priorities in Statewide RTA Capital Plan.	MassDOT	
3. Address Forward Funding		
a. Develop RTA position on Forward Funding, cost estimates, and strategy.	MassDOT and RTAs	TBD
b. Work with Legislature to advance Forward Funding.	MassDOT and RTAs	
4. Increase State Funding for Transportation		



C. IMPROVE CAPITAL PLANNING

Action	Responsibility	Duration
1. Develop Preliminary Asset Inventory		
a. Obtain available asset data from each RTA (all RTA assets not just vehicles).	MassDOT and RTAs	Start July 2012; complete with Capital Funding Process in February 2013
b. Assess existing RTA asset data.	MassDOT	
c. Use a state of good repair database and RTA estimates to provide standard useful life data and estimated asset replacement costs.	MassDOT	
d. Develop a preliminary assessment of RTA needs.	MassDOT with input from RTAs	
2. Develop Framework for Long-Term Statewide RTA Asset Inventory		
a. Develop proposed framework: - Roles and responsibilities for MassDOT and RTAs - Identify asset types and level of detail - Develop rating system for asset condition where useful life is not appropriate	MassDOT with input from RTAs	Follows on previous action; ongoing implementation
b. Discuss level of detail, rating system and submission requirements for statewide asset inventory.	RTA Council	
c. Begin compiling data in new format.	RTAs	
d. Submit asset inventory in new format to MassDOT.	RTAs	
e. Develop longer-term plan to phase-in collection of more detailed asset data, including condition data.	MassDOT with input from RTAs	
3. RTA Preparation of Annual Capital Plan Updates		
a. Develop consistent format and guidelines for RTA 5-Year Capital Plans.	MassDOT with input from RTAs	Builds on previous action; annual submission in January
b. Outline required components (prioritization, project justification, implementation plans, cost estimates, etc.).	MassDOT	
c. Obtain information on capital needs from RTAs.	RTAs	
d. Review content, level of detail, submission dates and other requirements.	RTA Council	
e. RTAs submit first annual Capital Plan in new format	RTAs	
4. MassDOT Preparation of Annual Statewide RTA Capital Plan		
a. Define statewide priorities for capital investment.	RTA Council with input from MPOs	Builds on previous action; annual submission in April
b. Identify desired statewide initiatives and enhancements.		
c. Work with RTAs and MPOs to develop strategies incorporate RTA Capital Plan priorities with regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) programming.		
d. Develop Statewide Capital Plan: - For FY 2014 based on information developed in Steps 1 and 3. - For FY 2015 and beyond based on information developed in Step 3.	MassDOT	



D. ENHANCE PUBLIC INFORMATION

Action	Responsibility	Duration
1. Identify Public Information Priorities and Standards		
a. Form MassDOT/RTA Council Working Group to identify public information needs and priorities. Include MBTA on Working Group.	RTA Council	Start October 2012; end October 2013
b. Review Beyond Boston research, RTA best practices, and MBTA practices to identify: - Necessary public information elements - Desirable public information elements - Practices/methods that would work best for RTAs	RTA Council	
c. Identify methods to ensure statewide consistency.		
d. Identify technical assistance needs.		
e. Review Working Group recommendations with MassDOT/RTA Council.	RTA Council	
f. Estimate costs of recommended actions, approaches for implementing recommendations, and potential funding sources.	MassDOT with input from RTAs	
g. Establish formal policies: - Types of public information that should be provided by RTAs - Other desirable information - Presentation/formatting guidelines	MassDOT with input from RTAs	
h. Develop optional website design/draft template for use by RTAs	RTA Council	
2. Establish “Challenge” Grant Program to Fund Information Innovations		
a. Develop program parameters, including funding source and funding levels.	MassDOT with input from RTAs	Follows previous action; start date TBD
b. Identify public information priorities (i.e., types of information) and greatest needs.	MassDOT	
c. Begin accepting applications from RTAs.	MassDOT	
d. Select projects to be funded.	MassDOT	



E. DEVELOP CONSISTENT DATA AND REPORTING

Action	Responsibility	Duration
1. Develop Standardized Reporting Methodology		
a. Define essential data to be reported. b. Define modes and service types in same manner as for Service Guidelines. c. Develop reporting methodology and timeline: - By RTA service area and provider - Consistent reporting of service provided by others (for example, HST, intercity bus, etc.) - Consistency with FTA National Transit Database (NTD) reporting - Rollup of data into FTA NTD reports - Timeline consistent with NTD timeline	MassDOT with input from RTAs	First data submission in October 2012; revised process by October 2013
d. Develop short-term spreadsheet-based reporting process.	MassDOT	
e. Implement process.	MassDOT and RTAs	
2. Produce RTA Data Reporting Guidebook		
a. Develop draft Data Reporting Guidebook that: - Describes the reporting process - Describes how data will be used - Defines terms - Presents an annual timeline for reporting activities - Provides detailed instructions	MassDOT with input from RTAs	Builds on previous task; guidebook available in 2013
b. Identify specific MassDOT and RTA personnel available to provide technical assistance.	MassDOT and RTAs	
c. Refine Guidebook as needed to ensure statewide consistency, reflect new services and programs, and maintain consistency with evolving NTD requirements.	MassDOT with input from RTAs	
3. Develop Electronic Reporting Process		
a. Develop beta electronic/web-based templates to facilitate reporting of data by RTAs and to automate compilation of summary reports.	MassDOT with input from RTAs	Available in 2013
b. Review with RTAs; revise and finalized based on RTA input.	RTA Council	
c. Implement web-based reporting process.	MassDOT and RTAs	
4. Produce Annual Scorecards		
a. Develop format based on Step 1.	MassDOT and RTAs	Start January 2014; then annually
b. Produce scorecards: - Short-term: information currently being reported. - Long-term, based on information developed through this initiative.	MassDOT	



F. DEVELOP SERVICE STANDARDS/GUIDELINES

Action	Responsibility	Duration
1. RTAs Identify Standards		
a. Develop an RTA working group to propose service guidelines that can be used by all RTAs. At a minimum, the guidelines should measure: - Service effectiveness/productivity (for example, passengers per vehicle service hour or mile, etc.) - Cost-effectiveness (for example, total or net cost per passenger, cost per vehicle service hour, etc.).	RTAs	Second half of 2012
b. Determine service guideline preferences: - Review service standards used by other states - Identify the service standards that could most effectively measure service and cost-effectiveness across all RTAs - Develop route classifications that would appropriately group similar types of routes - Develop minimum thresholds	RTA Working Group	
2. MassDOT Assists and Refines Proposal		
a. Review proposed service guidelines.	MassDOT	First half of 2013
b. Develop final set of service guidelines, service types, and minimum thresholds that balance RTA and MassDOT needs.	RTA Council	
c. Determine how the service guidelines will be used by the RTAs and MassDOT (for example, to monitor performance and identify routes that need improvement).	RTA Council	
3. Identify Simple Reporting Process		
a. Develop reporting requirements (in terms of level of detail) and schedule	RTA Council	Second half of 2013
b. Develop spreadsheet-based reporting format.	MassDOT with RTA input	
c. For on-going use, develop web-based reporting system.	MassDOT with RTA input	
d. Develop guidebook that presents the service guidelines, reporting requirements, and methodology.	MassDOT with RTA input	



G. IMPROVE SERVICE PLANNING

Action	Responsibility	Duration
1. Conduct Comprehensive Service Analyses (CSAs) on an Ongoing Basis		
a. Determine frequency that CSAs should be conducted (for example – initial plans within 5 years; after first plan every 7 years).	MassDOT with input from RTAs	Start second half 2013; ongoing
b. Determine required components: • Overview of existing system • Examine transit demand • Evaluation of existing services • Development and evaluation of alternative service scenarios • Recommended changes to better align services with market demand • Other	MassDOT with input from RTAs and MPOs/RPAs	
c. Identify rotating schedule (for example, three RTAs per year with five year cycle)	MassDOT with input from RTAs	
d. Begin conducting CSAs.	RTAs	
2. Develop Comprehensive Service Analysis (CSA) Guidebook		
a. Develop draft guidebook that describes: • The overall process and schedule • Objectives • Required elements • Optional elements • Differences (if any) in requirements in CSA elements by system type	MassDOT with input from RTAs/RPAs	First half 2013
b. Review draft with RTAs and revise based on RTA comments and issue final guidebook.	RTA Council	



H. IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL REVENUE

Action	Responsibility	Duration
1. Review Current Fares and Fare Policies; Consider Potential for Statewide Fare Policy		
a. Establish working group to review current RTA fares, fare policies and fare structures.	RTA Council	2014
b. Inventory/document RTA fare levels, revenues and fare structures.	RTA Council with input from RTA Advisory Boards	
c. Explore opportunities to generate additional revenues through fares; for example: • Minimum fare levels • Benchmarks and/or triggers for increasing fares • Statewide fare policy		
d. Develop preliminary recommendations.		
e. Draft fare policy and guidelines.	RTA Council with input from RTA Advisory Boards	
f. Implement fare policy.	MassDOT, RTAs and Advisory Boards	
2. Develop Framework for Pass Programs		
a. Create working group to examine and pursue opportunities for UPass partnerships.	RTA Council	2014
b. Inventory existing UPass agreements.	RTA Council	
c. Review existing partnerships.		
d. Invite representatives from community colleges, state colleges and public universities to discuss UPass potential.		
e. Work with Massachusetts Department of Education to determine feasibility of consistent approach for all Mass. universities and colleges.	RTA Council	
f. Develop action plan for promoting UPass program.	RTA Council	
g. Expand UPass programs with state colleges and universities.	RTAs	
3. Develop Framework for Other Partnerships		
a. Create working group to review potential partnerships, with focus on pass and service agreements with school districts and major employers.	RTA Council	2014
b. Inventory existing partnership agreements and national best practices.	RTA Council	
c. Invite representatives from school districts and/or major employers to discuss potential partnerships, needs, expectations and challenges.		
d. Develop action plan for promoting partnerships. Plan should include RTAs and potential partner needs.		
e. Expand partnerships with local school districts and major employers.		



I. IMPROVE CONTRACTING

Action	Responsibility	Duration
1. MassDOT Maintains RTA Contracts Database		
a. Obtain copies of all active contracts from individual RTAs.	MassDOT and RTAs	Start July 2012; ongoing
b. Use inventory to create database of RTA contracts to track major terms and elements, such as: • Execution data and contract length • Services included in contract (FR, ADA, etc.) • Escalation rates • Management fee and terms • Measures to limit cost escalation • Special terms (if any)	MassDOT	
c. Use database to review contracts and provide peer-to-peer information.	MassDOT and RTAs	
d. Update database to include current contracts.	MassDOT	
2. Support RTAs Interesting in Piloting Alternate Contracting Approach		
a. When/if and RTA expresses interest in piloting the fixed fee contracting approach evaluated in Beyond Boston process, MassDOT will offer to partner with the RTA to incorporate national best practices.	MassDOT and RTAs	TBD